

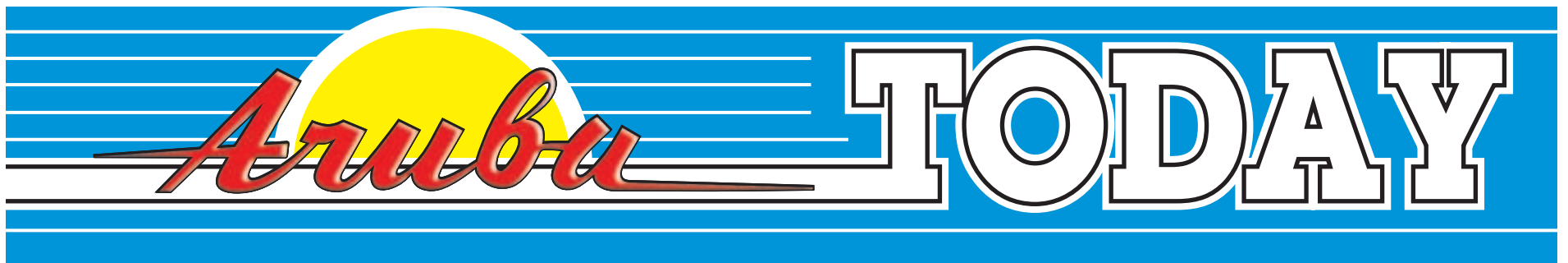
PASTOR DEFROCKED AFTER PERFORMING GAY WEDDING

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BERNANKE'S NEW FORMULA MAKING INVESTORS SMILE

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On Top Of The News Email: news@arubatoday.com website: www.arubatoday.com Tel: +297 582-7800 Friday, December 20, 2013

Dozens Injured In UK Roof Collapse

C. VINOGRAD
JILL LAWLESS
Associated Press

LONDON (AP) — The roof or ceiling of a London theatre partially collapsed Thursday night, showering a packed audience of about 700 with heaps of plaster, wood and dust, authorities and witnesses said.



A bandaged woman is seen following an incident at the Apollo Theatre, in London, Thursday evening, Dec. 19, 2013.

(AP Photo by Joel Ryan.)

More than 80 people were injured, including at least seven seriously, and several trapped theater-goers had to be rescued.

The collapse happened at the Apollo Theatre on Shaftesbury Avenue at 8:15 p.m. (2015 GMT; 3:15 p.m.) during a performance of "The Curious Incident Of The Dog In The Nighttime" at the height of the Christmas holiday season.

Continued on Page 2

SOFT TARGET



Shoppers queue outside a Target in New York. The retail giant confirmed on Thursday, Dec. 19, 2013 that a security breach that lasted almost three weeks before being discovered on Dec. 15 had given a hacker complete access to credit and debit card information for some 40 million customers.

(Christopher Gregory/The New York Times)

Target Confirms Data For 40 Million Shoppers Stolen

NICOLE PERLROTH
ELIZABETH A. HARRIS
© 2013 New York Times

SAN FRANCISCO - Target confirmed Thursday morning that it was investigating a security breach involving stolen credit card and debit card information for 40 million of its retail customers. In a statement, Target said criminals gained access to its customer information on Nov. 27 - the day before Thanksgiving and just ahead of one of the busiest shopping days of the year - and maintained access through

Dec. 15. "As of Dec. 15, we identified an unauthorized access and were able to resolve the issue," Molly Snyder, a Target spokeswoman, said in an email. A security blogger, Brian Krebs, first reported the breach Wednesday. Target said criminals had stolen customer names, credit or debit card numbers, expiration dates and three-digit security codes for 40 million customers who had shopped at its stores. The company noted that online customers were not affected by the

breach, which appeared to have been isolated to the point-of-sale systems in Target's retail stores.

Immediately after discovering the breach, Target said, it alerted federal authorities and financial institutions, and is currently working with a third-party forensics firm on an investigation.

Brian Leary, a spokesman for the Secret Service, which investigates financial fraud, said the agency was investigating.

Target advised its store customers to scan their

credit and debit accounts for unauthorized transactions and check their credit reports. "We take this matter very seriously and are working with law enforcement to bring those responsible to justice," Gregg W. Steinhafel, Target's chairman and chief executive, said in a statement. The company is encouraging everyone who shopped in its U.S. stores with a credit or debit card during the period to monitor their accounts.

Continued on Page 4

Dozens injured at partial London theater collapse

Continued from front

"Complete chaos" erupted in the theater as the debris rained down, said Martin Bostock, who came with his family to see the show, which is based on the best-selling novel by Mark Haddon.

"At first we thought it was part of the show," he told Sky News. "Then I got hit on the head."

Witnesses said audience members were screaming "Get out! Get out!" as they fled the theater and were

shaking with fear when they reached the street outside. "Within an instant, the entire roof caved in," another man told the BBC. A passing public double-decker bus was commandeered to transport some of the injured to a hospital. Police said they weren't aware of any fatalities "at this early stage," and that those who were seriously injured had been taken to hospitals following the collapse.

Dozens of "walking wounded" were treated at a

nearby theater, police said, while the fire department reported that all those who had been trapped in the Apollo have been rescued. More than two dozen ambulances and eight fire trucks were sent to the scene. Shaftesbury Avenue, normally one of London's busiest streets and teeming with pedestrians, was completely shut down.

London was hit by a strong thunderstorm about 7 p.m. (1900 GMT; 2 p.m. EST) that dumped heavy rain on the

city, but it wasn't immediately clear if that was related to the collapse.

The Apollo Theatre, named for the Greek and Roman god Apollo, god of music and the arts, was built in 1901 and has 775 seats. The London fire department said it thought around 700 people were in the theater at the time.

On its website, the theatre warned that its balcony was one of the steepest in London "so avoid if you have trouble with heights." □



A bandaged man comforts a woman following an incident at the Apollo Theatre, in London's Shaftesbury Avenue, Thursday evening, Dec. 19, 2013, during a performance.

(AP Photo by Joel Ryan, Invision)

Fidel Castro discloses brother's words to Obama

ANDREA RODRIGUEZ

Associated Press

HAVANA (AP) — Cuban President Raul Castro introduced himself to President Barack Obama in English at Nelson Mandela's funeral, telling him, "Mr. President, I'm Castro," as the two leaders shook hands. That's according to Castro's brother, Fidel, who broke months of silence Thursday with a lengthy editorial in state media discussing Cuba's ties to Mandela and his brother's trip to South Africa for his funeral. The Dec. 10 handshake set off speculation in the U.S. and Cuba about whether it

signaled a warming of ties between the two nations after decades of animosity. U.S. and Cuban officials dismissed that, calling the handshake a mere courtesy.

In his 2,400-word essay published Friday on the front pages of Cuba's government-run newspapers and websites, Fidel Castro congratulated his brother for his "steadfastness and dignity, when, with a friendly but firm gesture, he greeted the head of the U.S. government and told him in English, 'Mr. President, I'm Castro.'"

Castro, 87, handed over leadership of Cuba to his

brother after suffering intestinal bleeding in 2006. He last wrote one of his trademark editorials and appeared in a photo in September.

When Mandela died and Castro failed to appear in public or write about the loss of a close ally, many inside and outside Cuba wondered if it was an indication that his health had worsened.

As if to dispel those thoughts, the Cuban government on Monday published a photo of a vigorous-looking Castro meeting with a Spanish journalist three days earlier. The journalist,

Ignacio Ramonet, told

The Associated Press that he and Castro discussed a wide range of topics including Mandela, Venezuelan politics and climate change and "I found him to be in excellent health and in a good mood, physically, mentally and psychologically."

Castro wrote extensively about his relationship with Mandela in the article published Thursday, discussing Cuba's backing of Angolan fighters who battled forces supported by the pro-apartheid South African government of the 1980s. He condemned the United States for supporting the opposing forces. □

Haiti, Dominican Republic to discuss new court ruling

TRENTON DANIEL

Associated Press

PORT-AU-PRINCE, Haiti

(AP) — Haiti and the Dominican Republic will meet next month in an effort to resolve questions over a widely debated court decision that could render thousands of Haitian Dominicans stateless, Haiti's foreign minister said Thursday.

Foreign Affairs Minister Pierre-Richard Casimir told The Associated Press that five senior officials from each country will meet on Jan. 7 in the Haitian border town of Ouanaminthe.

With representatives from the United Nations, European Union and Caribbean present, they plan to discuss commerce and security issues but will focus mostly on a recent court decision in the Dominican Republic that threatens to strip citizenship from residents born to migrants who were living in the country illegally. Many of those affected are of Haitian descent.

"The main issue is the court ruling," Casimir said by telephone.

The gathering follows a meeting in Caracas this week by Haitian President Michel Martelly and Dominican President Danilo Medina at a conference for countries that belong to a Venezuelan trade bloc.

The two countries that share the Caribbean island of Hispaniola had stopped talking to each other after Caribbean leaders became the latest international group to condemn the court ruling. Each had also pulled its ambassador from the other's country.

Tensions arose around the same time when the Dominican military bused more than 350 Haitians and Dominicans of Haitian descent to the border following the killing of a Dominican couple.

Dominican authorities said people left on their own accord because they feared reprisals. The Dominican Republic has since promised to halt such repatriations, Casimir said. □

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New Mexico legalizes same-sex marriage

**BARRY MASSEY
RUSSELL CONTRERAS**
Associated Press

SANTA FE, New Mexico (AP)

— New Mexico became the latest state to legalize gay marriage Thursday as its highest court declared it is unconstitutional to deny marriage licenses to gay and lesbian couples.

Justice Edward L. Chavez said in a ruling that none of New Mexico's marriage statutes specifically prohibits same-gender marriages, but the state's laws as a whole have prevented gay and lesbian couples from marrying. The justices said same-sex couples are a discrete group that has been subjected to a history of discrimination and violence.

"Accordingly, New Mexico may neither constitutionally deny same-gender couples the right to marry nor deprive them of the rights, protections and responsibilities of marriage laws, unless the proponents of the legislation — the opponents of same-gender marriage — prove that the discrimination caused by the legislation is 'substantially related to an important government interest,'" Chavez wrote.

New Mexico joins 16 other states and the District of

Columbia in allowing gay marriage either through legislation, court rulings or voter referendums.

Eight of the state's 33 counties started issuing marriage licenses to same-sex couples in August when

riage.

State statutes don't explicitly prohibit or authorize gay marriage. However, county clerks historically have denied marriage licenses to same-sex couples because the law includes a

"This truly is a historic and joyful day for New Mexico," American Civil Liberties Union-New Mexico Legal Director Laura Schauer Ives said. "The more than 1,000 same-sex couples who have already mar-

represented same-sex couples in the Supreme Court case. They contended gay marriage must be allowed because of constitutional guarantees of equal protection under the law and a state constitutional prohibition against discrimination based on sexual orientation.

Attorney General Gary King said he had yet to analyze the ruling but was pleased with the high court's decision.

Asked whether same-sex couples could feel confident in getting a marriage license in New Mexico, King said yes.

"Based on what I understand about the opinion, now in every county in New Mexico clerks will be required to issue marriage licenses to same-sex couples," he said. "And certainly it's been our position that if you're validly married in New Mexico under those provisions, that your marriage has the same legal effect as marriage between a heterosexual couple."

King acknowledged that the laws in New Mexico that led to the debate are very complex and that the Legislature likely will want to weigh in during the next legislative session. □



Same-sex couples pack the Bernalillo County Clerk's office in Albuquerque with anticipation of obtaining a marriage license. The New Mexico Supreme Court legalized same-sex marriage in the state Thursday, Dec. 19, 2013, declaring in a ruling that it is unconstitutional to deny a marriage license to gay and lesbian couples. New Mexico joins 16 states and the District of Columbia in allowing gay marriage.

(AP Photo/Roberto Rosales)

a county clerk in southern New Mexico independently decided to allow the unions.

County officials had asked the high court to clarify the law and establish a uniform state policy on gay mar-

riage license application with sections for male and female applicants.

The ruling was a victory for gay rights activists who had been unable to win a legislative resolution of the issue.

ried in New Mexico can now rest certain knowing their marriages will be recognized and respected by our state."

The American Civil Liberties Union and the National Center for Lesbian Rights

Target Confirms Data For 40 Million Shoppers Stolen

Continued from front

Snyder said she could not disclose the number of

tigation, Snyder said she could not disclose how the company became aware

coverage to alert customers, rather than targeting particular customers who

phones. Some shopper data was also compromised in 2007, Snyder said, but the exposure and the number of accounts were "extremely limited."

This time, however, the breach is massive, and it could hardly come at a worse time of year for the retailer, during the final surge of Christmas shopping.

The holiday shopping season can generate anywhere from 20 to 40 percent of a retailer's annual sales, according to the National Retail Federation.

Snyder said some Target Red Card holders were having trouble accessing their accounts online Thursday. She said Target was working to fix the problem as quickly as possible.

Point-of-sale systems have become a major target for cybercriminals in recent years. By breaching point-of-sale systems, they can steal the so-called track

data on credit and debit cards, which can be sold, in bulk, on the black market and used to create counterfeit cards.

A similar breach affected Barnes & Noble stores last year. Last year, criminals also breached Global Payment Systems, one of the biggest card-transaction processors. The biggest known security compromise to date was an attack at Heartland Payment Systems, another credit card processor, in 2009. Criminals used malware to break into the company's internal network and steal data for 130 million cards.

In such cases, security experts said a company insider could have inserted malicious software into a company machine, or persuaded an unsuspecting employee to click on a link that downloaded software giving criminals a foothold into a company's systems. □



Shoppers arrive at a Target store in Los Angeles on Thursday, Dec. 19, 2013. Target says that about 40 million credit and debit card accounts may have been affected by a data breach that occurred just as the holiday shopping season shifted into high gear.

(AP Photo/Damian Dovarganes)

people in that group. She said the company began alerting customers Thursday morning.

Citing the ongoing inves-

of the problem.

At this stage, the company's approach to outreach has been using social media, email and news

may have been affected.

The company also set up a dedicated hotline for its shoppers, with hundreds of people to answer the

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Army cadet in US accused of emailing child pornography

JIM FITZGERALD

Associated Press

WHITE PLAINS, New York

(AP) — A West Point military academy cadet was arrested on campus Thursday and charged with distributing child pornography via email.

Papers filed in federal court allege that the cadet, Ricky Patrick Hester, sent videos up to 15 minutes long showing young boys engaged in explicit sexual activity.

Hester, 23, faces federal charges of distributing and possessing child pornography. If convicted of the distribution charge, he would face five to 20 years in prison.

The complaint claims that Hester admitted sending child porn videos when Homeland Security Investigations agents questioned him in his West Point dorm room Wednesday.

He appeared in federal court in White Plains on Thursday and was released after posting a \$50,000 bond co-signed by his mother, the U.S. attorney's office said. No plea was entered. □

Pastor defrocked after performing gay wedding

KATHY MATHESON

Associated Press

PHILADELPHIA (AP) —

United Methodist church officials defrocked a pastor from central Pennsylvania on Thursday who violated religious doctrine by officiating his son's gay wedding, a decision he later said shocked him because his involvement in the wedding an "act of love."

Frank Schaefer immediately appealed the penalty, which he believed was meted out reluctantly by many members of the regional Board of Ordained Ministry.

"So many of them came to me and they shook my hand and some hugged me, and so many of them had tears in their eyes," Schaefer said. "They said, 'We really don't want to do this, you know that, don't you?'"

Board members declined to comment after the private meeting at church offices in Norristown. But John Coleman, a spokesman for the Eastern Pennsylvania Conference of the denomination, said Schaefer left the board no choice after defying the order of a religious jury by refusing to resign. Schaefer has led a congregation in the town of Lebanon more than a decade. Earlier this year,

a church member filed a complaint over Schaefer performing the 2007 wedding of his gay son in Massachusetts, where same-sex unions are legal.

Although the Methodist

whether he could uphold the church's Book of Discipline. If he decided he could not, he was told to resign from the clergy by Thursday.

Schaefer said he told of-

"To which she said, 'Well, we're taking them.' And that was the end of it." Schaefer said.

Although the Methodist church accepts gay and lesbian members, it rejects



Accompanied by his wife Brigitte, right, the Rev. Frank Schaefer, of Lebanon, Pa., center, departs after a meeting with officials at the Eastern Pennsylvania Conference of the United Methodist Church, Thursday, Dec. 19, 2013, in Norristown, Pa. Church officials have defrocked Schaefer, who officiated his son's gay wedding in Massachusetts. (AP Photo/Matt Rourke)

church accepts gay and lesbian members, it rejects the practice of homosexuality as "incompatible with Christian teaching."

Last month, a church jury suspended Schaefer for 30 days and said he should use the time to decide

officials Thursday morning that he could not uphold a book that he feels is contradictory and biased against gay people.

He refused to voluntarily surrender his credentials when asked by the board president.

the practice of homosexuality as "incompatible with Christian teaching" and bars clergy from performing same-sex unions.

The issue has split America's largest mainline Protestant denomination amid a rapid shift in public opinion. □

High-level courtship yields Minnesota engineering jobs

BRIAN BAKST

Associated Press

ST. PAUL, Minn. (AP) — A Canadian company that makes sophisticated heating and ventilation systems will build a research facility and bring 40 engineering jobs to a Twin Cities suburb thanks in part to high-level courtship and a \$700,000 state grant announced Thursday.

Minnesota Gov. Mark Dayton and a top executive from the company, Price Industries, were among those who unveiled the project at a news conference at the state Capitol. Dayton's personal interest in landing the company led him on a covert trip in July to its Winnipeg headquarters, a visit he wouldn't disclose then for fear of harming his state's chances. The company's grant comes from a \$30 million Minnesota In-

vestment Fund.

Senior vice president Bruce Dorey said the company considered multiple states for the research center, although he didn't say which. He said the subsidy, Dayton's visit and a highly skilled Minnesota workforce tipped the scales.

"We visited many states, many miles and sometimes didn't get in the door and sometimes we did," Dorey said. "We turned over as many rocks as possible."

Dorey said no other governors whose states were competing for the work made the trek north to make a pitch.

Dayton, a Democrat up for re-election in 2014, has taken great pains to highlight job gains on his watch. The state has recovered all of the jobs lost in the last recession and then some.

In recent months, Dayton's

administration helped craft incentive deals for a photo printing plant for California-based Shutterfly and for Endeavor Air, a regional jet

taxes would sour the Minnesota business climate.

Dorey said Minnesota also got an edge because of an existing orbit of compa-

used to heat and ventilate specialized settings, such as operating rooms and other sterile environments.

The new Maple Grove jobs



A bicyclist and pedestrian brave frigid temperatures crossing the Stone Arch Bridge in December, 2013 in Minneapolis. A Canadian company that makes sophisticated heating and ventilation systems will build a research facility and bring 40 engineering jobs to a Twin Cities suburb thanks in part to high-level courtship and a \$700,000 state grant announced Thursday.

(AP Photo/The Star Tribune, David Joles)

operator moving its headquarters from Memphis to Minnesota. It's all meant to counter Republican criticism that his moves to raise

nies that are home to engineers and universities that help train them. Price was founded in 1946 and makes customized equipment

will have an average pay of \$80,000. Hiring is already underway. The plan is for an 11,000-square foot design center. □

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Holiday Shopping:

Vegan leather, faux fur are hot holiday gifts this year!

MAE ANDERSON
AP Retail Writer

ATLANTA (AP) — Finding a knockoff version of the fur you want under the Christmas tree would ordinarily be a disappointment. Not this year.

Faux is the new black this season for holiday gifts. But this isn't the "pleather" of the 1980s — that cheap, plastic-looking material made popular by Michael Jackson during his "Thriller" days.

A \$198 fuzzy brown coat at Banana Republic has a prominently placed tag that reads "faux fur." Dresses with "vegan leather" accents are flying off virtual shelves at shopbop.com. And at luxury retailer Barney's, a Marni faux leather three-quarter sleeve jacket sells for \$1,900.

Faux is gaining popularity in part because there have been advances in technology enabling designers to make better-looking fakes. In a still-shaky economy that has made Americans more frugal, faux also can



This undated image provided by Banana Republic shows Banana Republic's Fair Isle Faux-Fur Neckwarmer. From faux fur coats to "vegan leather" accents, faux fur gifts are trending, in 2013.

(AP Photo/Banana Republic)

be seen as a good way to be trendy without breaking the bank. And a movement toward socially conscious shopping makes some people feel better about faux purchases. It helps that some A-listers have given faux their seal of approval. Models have

been seen on the runway wearing faux leather pieces in shows for big-name designers like Tom Ford and Rag & Bone. And actresses Anne Hathaway and Kate Hudson have strutted on the red carpet in faux leather and fur. While it's difficult to pin

down overall sales for faux goods, retailers say they are benefiting from their growing popularity. Banana Republic's \$69.50 faux-fur neckwarmer and faux-fur leopard vests have been best sellers. Target says faux fur home goods like pillows and throws are performing "exceptionally well."

And Macy's says new techniques used with faux leather, like scalloping and quilted stitching, have given tops and jackets "new relevance."

"It used to be that 'faux' meant less expensive and quality less than desirable, but not any longer," said Josh Saterman, vice presi-

dent and fashion director for millennials at Macy's. "Faux is a part of our next evolution to our fashion 'must-haves.'"

Andrew Dent, who is a vice president at global materials consultancy Material Connexion, says that the trend is being fueled by the fact that faux fur and leather are nearly indistinguishable from the real thing nowadays. He said that's because designers are replacing older plastic like PVC with improved polyurethane that is more leather-like to the touch. They're also tapering synthetic fibers to make faux fur seem more luxe and softer. □

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US Financial Front:

In his final performance, Ben Bernanke rewrites the script

JOSH BOAK
AP Economics Writer

WASHINGTON (AP) — In his final performance, Ben Bernanke rewrote the script: Tough news goes down best when it's mixed with a little sweetener.

Investors had been on edge for months about when the Federal Reserve might slow its economic stimulus. A pullback in the Fed's bond purchases, they feared, could jack up interest rates and whack stocks. Bernanke's mere mention of the possibility in June had sent stocks tumbling.

So on Wednesday, Bernanke showed something he'd learned from leading the Fed and addressing the public for eight years.

At his last news conference

as chairman, he explained that the Fed would trim its monthly bond purchases by \$10 billion to \$75 bil-

lion — a prospect that had worried the markets.

Yet Bernanke also calmed nerves by walking back

a plan to consider raising short-term rates once unemployment reaches 6.5 percent from the current 7 percent.

That 6.5 percent threshold the Fed had been using? Not much of a threshold anymore. The Fed now says it expects to keep its key short-term rate near zero "well past" the time that unemployment falls below 6.5 percent.

The message: The Fed expects low-cost loans to boost the economy for, well, for a very long time. Investors rejoiced by sending the Dow Jones industrial average rocketing nearly 300 points to a record high.

It means that five years after the Fed responded to the financial crisis by cutting its key short-term rate to near zero, it has no plans to change course. Low rates encourage spending, hiring and investing. At the same time, critics say it can inflate dangerous bubbles in stocks, housing and other assets.

Bernanke's remarks suggested that three factors had led him to the balance he struck Wednesday: The unemployment rate can be misleading. The Fed wants to avoid setting unrealistic expectations. And inflation remains so low that it poses a potential problem for the economy. Unemployment has fallen in part because the equivalent of more than 7 million Americans left the workforce and were no longer counted as unemployed. Some of this reflects an aging population. Some of it comes from a discouraged group of Americans who can't find jobs. All of it suggests an underlying weakness in the economy.

"We want to look at hiring, quits, vacancies, participation, long-term unemployment," Bernanke said Wednesday. "So I expect there will be some time past the 6.5 percent before all of the other variables we'll be looking at will line up in a way that will give us confidence that the labor

market is strong enough to withstand the beginning of increases in rates."

Most Fed officials now expect unemployment to drop to 6.5 percent by the end of next year, according to new projections released Wednesday. Many projected that rates would increase starting in 2015 — seven years after the financial crisis erupted.

Secondly, more transparency has not stabilized the markets. The stock sell-off that occurred in June after Bernanke suggested that bond purchases could soon end eventually turned into a rally. After the Fed chose not to pull back on its buying at its September meeting, stocks set record highs.

Instead of stabilizing the markets, Bernanke's specifics had created a yo-yo effect. Economist Stanley Fischer, who taught Bernanke at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, warned that overly specific forward guidance had made financial markets more volatile.

A former governor at the Bank of Israel who is expected to be nominated by President Barack Obama to become the Fed's vice chairman, Fischer believes that rates should be determined by a series of economic conditions that are hard to forecast.

"We don't know what we'll be doing a year from now," he said at a September conference in Hong Kong. "It's a mistake to try and get too precise."

And, lastly, there is the trouble created by low inflation.

The Fed's dual mandate is to maximize employment and provide stable prices. But inflation as measured by the index the Fed monitors has been only about half the central bank's 2 percent target this year.

Some Fed officials forecast that inflation could stay below their target through 2016. The word "inflation" was mentioned 86 times during Bernanke's news conference. □



Federal Reserve Chairman Ben Bernanke smiles as he is asked a question during a news conference at the Federal Reserve in Washington, Wednesday, Dec. 18, 2013.

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Egypt rights center raided, 2 Mubaraks acquitted



Egyptian supporters of former leader Hosni Mubarak celebrate after a court acquitted Mubarak's two sons and his last prime minister of corruption charges, judiciary officials said at a court, in Cairo, Egypt, Thursday, Dec. 19, 2013. The officials said a Cairo criminal court found Gamal and Alaa Mubarak and Ahmed Shafiq innocent of corruption in a case that arose from the 1995 sale of a plot of land to Mubarak's sons by an association led at the time by the former prime minister. (AP Photo/Ahmed Abd El Latif, El Shorouk)

HAMZA HENDAWI

Associated Press

CAIRO (AP) — Egypt's military-backed authorities on Thursday stepped up their crackdown on the liberal icons of the 2011 uprising against Hosni Mubarak, with security forces storming the headquarters of a rights group and arresting six activists, including a prominent youth organizer. Hours after the early morning raid in downtown Cairo, a criminal court in the Egyptian capital acquitted Hosni Mubarak's two sons and his last prime minister of corruption charges in a case arising from a land sale dating back to some 20 years ago. The sons remain in detention and still face other corruption charges.

Five of the six activists were released after nearly seven hours in detention. One of the five, lawyer Mahmoud Bilal, described in a news conference how plainclothes policemen blindfolded, beat and verbally abused them after binding their hands.

Already in detention are three of the 2011 uprising's best known youth leaders — Alaa Abdel-Fattah, Ahmed Douma and Ahmed Maher — who are accused of breaking a recently introduced law that

places draconian conditions on street protests and of assaulting police.

The raid and the acquittal of Mubarak's sons and Ahmed Shafiq will likely lend credibility to growing suspicions that the government installed by the powerful military after its July ouster of Islamist President Mohammed Morsi is prepared to accommodate Mubarak-era figures to broaden its support base as it grapples with near-daily street protests from Morsi supporters and growing dissent by liberal and secular youth groups.

The need for support is all the more pressing because of a worsening economy, growing criticism of the government's human rights record and next month's nationwide referendum on a draft constitution penned by a 50-member panel appointed by Interim President Adly Mansour.

The Jan. 14-15 vote on the draft will be the first real test of the post-Morsi regime, which is hoping for a comfortable "yes" majority to enshrine its legitimacy. Morsi's Muslim Brotherhood says it will boycott the vote and is calling on its followers to take to the streets during the two-day referendum.

Parliamentary and presi-

dential elections — the last two steps in the road map announced by military chief Gen. Abdel-Fattah el-Sissi in July — are expected by the summer of 2014, although it has not been finally decided which will be held first.

Mansour, the interim president, on Thursday held the first of four meetings with politicians, associations, unions and youth groups at the end of which he is expected to announce a final timetable for the two votes.

The corruption acquittals also will likely be viewed as a continuation of the perceived failure to bring to justice those who committed crimes during Mubarak's 29-year rule.

To date, nearly all policemen charged in the killing

of more than 800 protesters during the 2011 uprising have been acquitted or received suspended sentences. Several senior Mubarak regime figures have also been acquitted of criminal charges.

The Cairo criminal court found Gamal and Alaa Mubarak and Ahmed Shafiq innocent of corruption in a case that arose from the 1995 sale of a plot of land to Mubarak's sons by an association led at the time by the former prime minister.

Prosecutors claim the land was sold to the two at below market value and were given a larger plot than what was stated in the contract. Also acquitted were four retired generals who served as board members of the association. □



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Putin to pardon jailed oil tycoon Khodorkovsky

**N. VASILYEVA
V. ISACHENKOV
Associated Press
MOSCOW (AP)** — In a surprise decision, President Vladimir Putin announced

move that will see his top foe and Russia's onetime richest man freed after more than a decade in prison. The development, along

the 30-member crew of a Greenpeace protest ship, appeared aimed at easing international criticism of Russia's human rights record ahead of February's

his tightly choreographed annual news conference to make the announcement, dropping the biggest news of the day after journalists had already peppered him with questions in a four-hour marathon.

Putin said the 50-year-old Khodorkovsky, who was set to be released next August, had submitted an appeal for pardon, something he had refused to do before.

"He has spent more than 10 years behind bars. It's a tough punishment," Putin said. "He's citing humanitarian aspects — his mother is ill. A decree to pardon him will be signed shortly." The head of the Kremlin's United Russia faction said he expects Khodorkovsky to celebrate the New Year at home with his family. Khodorkovsky's son, Pavel, tweeted: "Very happy news. Waiting to speak with my father to learn more."

Putin's announcement "came as a big surprise for me, totally out of the blue," Khodorkovsky's mother, Maria, told RT television.

"We are old people, and we are waiting, hoping to live to the moment when we can embrace him," his father, Boris, said in remarks posted on the Slon.ru online newspaper.

Analysts viewed the decision as a clever step ahead of the Sochi Olympics.

"At first blush, the pardon for Khodorkovsky appears to be a rather canny move that will throw Putin's critics off-balance in the run-up to Sochi, while sending a clear message of self-confidence to his domestic political opponents," Andrew Weiss of the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace said in a written commentary.

In October 2003, masked commandos stormed into Khodorkovsky's jet on the tarmac of a Siberian airport and arrested him at gunpoint. He was found guilty of tax evasion in 2005 and convicted of embezzlement in a second case in 2010.

Critics have dismissed the charges against Khodorkovsky as a Kremlin vendetta for challenging Putin's power. □



Russian President Vladimir Putin answers a question about Mikhail Khodorkovsky after his annual news conference in Moscow, Russia, Thursday, Dec. 19, 2013. President Vladimir Putin said Thursday he will pardon jailed oil tycoon Mikhail Khodorkovsky, a surprise decision that will let his top foe and Russia's formerly richest man out of prison after more than a decade.

(AP Photo/Alexei Nikolsky)

Thursday that jailed former oil tycoon Mikhail Khodorkovsky will be pardoned, a

with an amnesty for two jailed members of the Pussy Riot punk band and

Winter Olympics in Sochi, Putin's pet project. Putin waited until just after

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Trial of Kenyan leader may be collapsing: prosecutor

RICK GLADSTONE
© 2013 New York Times

The prosecution of Kenya's president for crimes against humanity, the highest-profile trial undertaken by the International Criminal Court, appeared near collapse on Thursday, when the prosecutor abruptly announced that she lacked sufficient evidence to proceed and was seeking an indefinite delay. The prosecutor, Fatou Bensouda, said in a statement from the court at The Hague that she could

no longer rely on two key witnesses needed to try the president, Uhuru Kenyatta, because one witness said he was no longer willing to testify, and the other had confessed to giving false evidence.

"Having carefully considered my evidence and the impact of the two withdrawals, I have come to the conclusion that currently the case against Kenyatta does not satisfy the high evidentiary standards required at trial," Bensouda said in the statement. □

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Jury finds 2 men guilty of UK soldier murder

JILL LAWLESS

Associated Press

LONDON (AP) — Two British-born, al-Qaida-inspired extremists who considered themselves "soldiers of Allah" were convicted Thursday of murdering an off-duty serviceman who was run down with a car and stabbed to death in a frenzied attack on a London street.

acted as the jury foreman announced the verdicts. Adebolajo, at 29 the elder of the two, smiled and kissed a copy of the Quran as he was led down to the cells.

Members of Rigby's family stood in tears outside London's Central Criminal Court as a police officer read out a statement on their behalf.

siliers who had served in Afghanistan, was returning on foot to his barracks in south London when he was hit by the car being driven by Adebolajo. As the soldier lay on the ground, Adebowale repeatedly stabbed him and Adebolajo attempted to cut off his head.

One witness described the attack, which took place on a busy street near a primary school, as looking "like a butcher attacking a joint of meat."

Adebolajo was filmed by a passer-by moments later, covered in blood and holding a cleaver and a knife, justifying the attack "because Muslims are dying daily by British soldiers."

"An eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth," he said repeatedly on the video. Adebolajo later told the police, in an interview played in court, that he and Adebowale had decided to kill a British soldier, and Rigby had been targeted because "he was the soldier that was spotted first."

Adebowale, who has suffered mental health issues since his arrest, chose to present no evidence in his defense during the three-week trial. His lawyer, Abbas Lakha, told the jury that his client agreed with Adebolajo's description of the attack as a "military operation" and the two men as soldiers.

After the attack the two killers waited at the scene, and then charged at a police car waving a machete and a gun.

Both men had denied trying to kill a police officer,

saying they hoped to provoke police into shooting them. Lakha said Adebowale had brandished a 90-year-old unloaded pistol so he "would achieve martyrdom." □



This photo made from CCTV and issued by the Metropolitan Police on Thursday Dec. 19, 2013 shows Michael Adebolajo and Michael Adebowale walking to the south footpath of Artillery Place, which was shown in court during the trial of Michael Adebolajo and Michael Adebowale who were found guilty of murdering Fusilier Lee Rigby.

(AP Photo/Metropolitan Police)

The jury of eight women and four men deliberated for just 90 minutes before finding Michael Adebolajo and Michael Adebowale guilty of murdering Fusilier Lee Rigby. They were acquitted of attempting to murder a police officer. The two men will be sentenced early next year. Neither defendant re-

"We are satisfied that justice has been done," the statement said. "But unfortunately no amount of justice will bring Lee back." Adebolajo and 22-year-old Adebowale had pleaded not guilty to murder, though neither denied taking part in the May 22 attack. The 25-year-old Rigby, a member of the Royal Fu-

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Chinese cartoon producer blamed after kids burned

LOUISE WATT
Associated Press

BEIJING (AP) — A Chinese court has ruled that the producer of a hit kids' cartoon was partly to blame for the injuries suffered by two children when their friend tied them to a tree and set them on fire in an imitation of a scene from the show, state media reported. Two brothers aged 7 and 4 from eastern Jiangsu province were badly burned in April by the actions of their 10-year-old friend, who confessed he was copying a scene from "Xi Yangyang & Hui Tailang," which translates as "Pleasant Goat and Big Big Wolf," the of-

ficial Xinhua News Agency said. The 7-year-old suffered burns over 80 percent of his body and his brother 40 percent. The cartoon popular among children and adults features a wolf who hunts a goat and tries to prevent it from escaping, to no avail. Scenes have included the goat being plunged into boiling water and receiving electric shocks. The wolf's wife regularly beats her husband over the head with a pan when he fails to bring the goat home for their dinner. Xinhua said the court ruled that the legal guardians of the boy who set his friends



A woman and child gather near mascots of characters from the cartoon "Pleasant Goat and Big Big Wolf" on a street in Beijing, China. A Chinese court has ruled the producer of the hit kids cartoon was partly to blame for the injuries suffered by two children when their friend tied them to a tree and set them on fire in an imitation of a scene from the show.

(AP Photo/Ng Han Guan)

alight and the producer, Guangzhou-based Creative Power Entertaining Co., Ltd., are jointly responsible for the two brothers' injuries. The boy's guardians will have to pay 60 percent of the injured brothers' compensation and the company will pay 15 percent. It didn't say who would pay the remainder. Xinhua didn't give the total compensation amount, but other media reports said the company would have to pay 39,000 yuan (\$6,400), and that the case was a civil one brought by

the brothers' family. The Donghai County People's Court refused to answer questions and referred queries to their propaganda office, where calls rang unanswered. The company declined to comment. Users of China's lively Twitter-like sites poured scorn on the assigning of blame on the company, with some questioning why state broadcaster China Central Television, which televises the cartoon, wasn't held responsible. Hao Rui, a lawyer from Beijing Yingke Law Firm who specializes in lawsuits in-

volving the media industry, said it was the first time he had heard of a producer being sued and held liable for a child imitating something seen on TV. One reason may be because the other defendants and the children's family can't afford to pay the medical costs, he said. In 2010, Creative Power Entertaining signed an agreement with Buena Vista International for the latter to air "Pleasant Goat and Big Big Wolf" on Disney channels in the Asia-Pacific region in more than 10 languages, including English. □

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Cayman police arrested bomb hoax suspects

GEORGE TOWN, Cayman Islands (AP) — Cayman Islands police have arrested two local men on suspicion of calling in a bomb hoax that prompted the evacuation of two major beach resorts at the start of the winter tourist season. Fire, police and ambulance services rushed to Ritz-Carl-

ton, Grand Cayman and the Caribbean Club condominium hotel on Saturday after bomb threats were made. Traffic was diverted around the resorts, which had hundreds of guests. A search turned up nothing. Police Superintendent Kurt Walton said Thursday that the hoax resulted

in the deployment of "considerable police and other emergency resources." He says the two men face a maximum prison term of 10 years if convicted. The suspects were not identified, but their ages were given as 48 and 53. It was not immediately clear if they had lawyers. □



Tierra del Sol Recognizes its Employees

WEST PUNT - Last Friday around the pool at Tierra del Sol Golf, Spa, and Resort, employees came together for a casual celebration of success. Employees were recognized for the excellent work that they are doing to create and support a great guest experience. During the evening, management recognized employees from all departments who excelled during the year and best reflected Tierra del Sol's promise of being the "Jewel of the Caribbean".

A total of 8 employees received special recognition from their manager, who shared their accomplishments and presented them with a gift certificate, just in time for the holidays. The employees that were recognized were Mrs. Yvonne Boekhoudt of the Golf Pro Shop, Mr. Juan Carlos Jimenez of Golf Maintenance, Mrs. Anna Amato of the Restaurant Guest Services, Mrs. Benita Petrochi of the Restaurant Kitchen, Mrs. Jane-lyn Jiao of the Spa & Gym Facili-



ties, Mrs. Eridania Rosario of Villas Rental Services, Mr. Edwin Ortega of Engineering, and Mrs. Petra

Snieders of Accounting. The recognized employees, together with their colleagues, enjoyed the eve-

ning with food and music, as they look forward to a successful year ahead. □





Players awarded holiday shopping cash at The Casino at the Radisson!

PALM BEACH - Nina Dodd from Maryland, who hit three sevens on the Mega Multiplier-Hot-Hot 7, earned a hefty US\$18,000 jackpot, which she says, will take care of all her Christmas shopping lists, for the naughty and for the nice. Carol Caccese, from Staten Island, New York, who won a US\$ 5,400 jackpot



playing the casino's \$5 machines, was equally happy as the jackpot came in on time, just before the holidays, and she immediately posed for a picture-opportunity with her loot. The casino has been gearing up for the pre-Christmas bingo on the 21st and 22nd of December and for the pre-New Year's Eve bingo on the 28th, and 29th of December advertising its

Bingo Progressive Jackpot which stands this week on \$ 44,025.05 and counting, the largest progressive on the Island. Saturday bingo is \$6 and Sunday Bingo \$10 with thousands of dollars in prizes and with tickets for a chance to win the coveted progressive jackpot, available at the Casino cashier. □

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ORANJESTAD - The underwater playground of Aruba's reefs are a joy to visitors and considered a treasure to the local population, but it also represents home and breeding sites for reef fish as well as an important part of the overall marine



ecosystem. Education continues to play a key role in helping to protect and preserve both Aruba's marine life and reefs, and Jolly Pirates are helping to head that cause with its own "Save the Reefs" Bracelet Program. Funds generated from the program recently went to sponsor school kids attendance in classes on water safety, fish identification and responsible sailing and snorkeling.

Harald Buser, who operates the Jolly Pirates excursions for more than sixteen years explains, "it's time to devote myself to this worthy cause - To raise more awareness for healthy coral reefs in Aruba Carla Cavallaro, of the Jolly Pirates designed a trio of bracelets which their snorkel and sunset sail guests are offered in exchange for a small donation. All funds raised go into educational programs and protection efforts to preserve Aruba's spectacular underwater landscapes of coral reefs."

The majority of children who benefitted from the recent program happen to share an affinity with the sea as second and third generation kids of families involved in water sports. After participating in an essay contest, the kids enjoyed instruction from Canicio Van Der Biezen, and then practiced their new-

ly-learned skills on a sail aboard the Jolly Pirates. The program was a success through the generous contributions of many individuals, including schoolteachers, boat captains, master divers and rescue workers, as well as each person who chose to donate through Jolly Pirates' Bracelet Program.

"Giving back to Aruba is easy when you consider all that the island has given me," comments Carla, who watches her own son Tyler grow up with a love of the sea. "We've been blessed to find home, happiness and business success in Aruba, and it only makes sense that to do our part in ensuring we help protect the island's treasured marine environment for the next generation. It will be these kids who eventually take the reins in helping to realize a marine park for Aruba."

In exchange for a donation of \$15.00, visitors to the Jolly Pirates gift shop at Moomba Beach receive an attractive bracelet trio. Each dollar -- 100% of the donation -- is given to the Marine Park Foundation for the Save the Reefs Programs. While guests can feel good about contributing to valuable education efforts, they can also use the bracelets as a special gift or as an Aruba souvenir. A

special thank you goes to everyone who made a donation and wears the Jolly Pirates Awareness Bracelets! Each person who purchases the bracelets can feel good knowing that donations are being used well!

To become a member of either the Aruba Heritage Museum Foundation or the Aruba Marine Park Foundation or participate in their projects, call: (297) 736-2273, or visit the Aruba Marine Park Foundation face book page or email



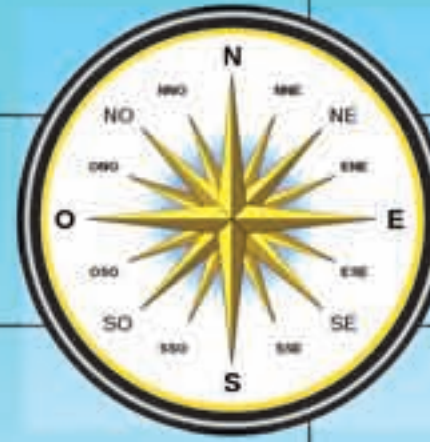
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Miami Heat's Ray Allen reacts after making a 3-pointer to put the Heat ahead in the second half of an NBA basketball game against the Indiana Pacers, Wednesday, Dec. 18, 2013, in Miami. The Heat won 97-94.

Associated Press
NBA's best rivalry Page 22

Beltran, Yankees finalize \$45M, 3-year contract

NEW YORK (AP) — Outfielder Carlos Beltran and the New York Yankees have finalized a \$45 million, three-year contract. The agreement, reached Dec. 6, was announced by the team Thursday. The eight-time All-Star is to be introduced at a Yankee Stadium news conference Friday. The 36-year-old played for the Mets from 2005-11, when he was dealt to San Francisco. He signed a \$26

million, two-year contract with St. Louis before the 2012 season and reached the World Series for the first time this year. Slowed by knee injuries, Beltran has retained a potent bat — especially in October. He hit .296 with 24 homers and 84 RBIs for the Cardinals this year and added two homers and 15 RBIs in the postseason. Beltran injured ribs in the World Series opener when



In this Oct. 24, 2013, file photo, St. Louis Cardinals' Carlos Beltran hits an RBI single during Game 2 of baseball's World Series against the Boston Red Sox in Boston.

Associated Press

he banged into Fenway Park's right-field fence while robbing Boston's David Ortiz of a grand slam. New York seems to have a logjam among outfielders on its roster, a group that includes Jacoby Ellsbury, Brett Gardner, Ichiro Suzuki, Alfonso Soriano and Vernon Wells. To open a roster spot, the Yankees designated right-hander Brett Marshall for assignment. □

Air bag safety system tested on World Cup skiers

ANDREW DAMPF

AP Sports Writer

VAL GARDENA, Italy (AP)

— A radical air bag system that could have a big impact on safety in skiing is being tested on the World Cup circuit for the first time this week.

Werner Heel of Italy and Jan Hudcok of Canada wore the air bags behind their necks in downhill training Thursday.

Working with the International Ski Federation (FIS), the Italian manufacturer Dainese has been collecting information from skiers for four years to find the exact algorithm as to when can the system should go into effect — in other words, at what point in a fall can a racer no longer regain control.

"We are very close," men's World Cup director Guenther Hujara said.

Up to six skiers will wear the air bags in downhill training sessions for the rest of this season. They have not been approved for races yet.

A similar air bag system has been in use in motorcycle racing since 2009.

In motorcycle racing, the air bag system inflates when the body leaves the bike with a forward rotation, whereas in skiing the

exact moment when a racer loses complete control varies from one crash to another.

Dainese collected information from skiers by lodging special chips in their back protectors that record speed, angular rotation, acceleration and other information.

While skiers have been wearing the chips for four years, this was the first time a skier wore an air bag on a World Cup course.

"This is a giant step," said Vittorio Cafaggi, Dainese's strategic development manager.

The air bags did not inflate Thursday, because neither Heel nor Hudcok crashed.

Four of the skiers wearing the air bags in the future will be those racers sponsored by Dainese — Heel, Hudcok, and Canadians Manuel Osborne-Paradis and Erik Guay — plus two other random racers who can apply to wear the systems at each training session.

"It's great to see private companies getting involved in taking great technologies from other sports and applying it to skiing," U.S. Ski Team men's head coach Sasha Rearick said, adding that he would encourage his racers to

wear the air bags. "It's impressive."

Other safety improvements the FIS has been working on are non-abrasive undergarments made by Energia Pura, which became an objective after a nasty crash involving current overall World Cup leader Aksel Lund Svindal in Beaver Creek, Colorado, in 2007.

The FIS has also started using orange gates to alert skiers to dangerous sections in downhill courses.

"We are trying to implement these things into the rules as soon as the development allows it," Hujara said. □



Canada's Erik Guay is airborne as he speeds on his way to clock the fastest time during training for a men's ski World Cup downhill, in Val Gardena, Italy, Thursday, Dec. 19, 2013.

Associated Press



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NHL Roundup

Sutter leads Pens to shootout win over Rangers

The Associated Press

NEW YORK (AP) — Pittsburgh's Brandon Sutter scored in the third period and then rescued the Penguins with the only goal of the shootout, giving the visitors a 4-3 win over the New York Rangers on Wednesday.

Sutter gave the Penguins a 3-1 lead just 1:01 after Pascal Dupuis had put the side ahead, but Pittsburgh could not hold the edge as Mats Zuccarello and Derrick Brassard tied the game with late goals.

It took until the fifth round of the shootout for the deadlock to be broken for good, and the Penguins skated off with their fifth straight victory.

Chris Kunitz had a goal and assist for the Penguins while Sidney Crosby had two assists to push his NHL-leading points total to 49.



New York Rangers goalie Henrik Lundqvist (30) watches as the puck shot by Pittsburgh Penguins center Brandon Sutter enters the net during the shootout of an NHL hockey game on Wednesday, Dec. 18, 2013, in New York. The Penguins defeated the Rangers 4-3.

Associated Press

In the day's other game, Jaromir Jagr moved up the list of all-time scorers as he beat Ottawa 5-2. Jagr moved past Steve

Yzerman and into sole possession of eighth place on the NHL goals list with 693, one behind Mark Messier. The 41-year-old Jagr's first power-play goal of the season gave him a team-leading 12 goals.

Reid Boucher, by contrast, scored his first career goals, while Stephen Gionta, Damien Brunner and Eric Gelinas also scored for the Devils.

Colin Greening and Milan Michalek scored for the Senators. □



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CASINO AND SHOPS

Seattle's CB Browner suspended indefinitely

TIM BOOTH

AP Sports Writer

RENTON, Washington (AP)

— Seattle Seahawks cornerback Brandon Browner was suspended indefinitely by the NFL on Wednesday for violating the league's substance abuse policy.

The suspension is the second in two seasons for Browner.

He was suspended four games last season for violating the league's policy on performance-enhancing substances. He's the second Seahawks player to

be suspended for violating the substance abuse policy this season. Fellow cornerback Walter Thurmond is serving the final week of a four-game suspension.

Browner, whose suspension is effective immediately and without pay, sent out a lengthy statement vowing that he would continue to fight his suspension and sounding resigned that his career with the Seahawks was over.

Browner was injured against Atlanta on Nov. 10 and hasn't played since.

He is in his third season with the Seahawks. He started all 26 games he has played for the Seahawks and has 19 tackles, one interception and 10 passes defended this season.

He was a Pro Bowl selection in 2011 when he had 23 passes defended and six interceptions, but had not been able to match those numbers in the subsequent two seasons.

Browner was to become a free agent after the season and could file for reinstatement after one year. □



In this Sept. 22, 2013, photo, Seattle Seahawks' Brandon Browner stands before an NFL football game against the Jacksonville Jaguars in Seattle.

Associated Press

Speeding up return, Vonn second in downhill training



Lindsey Vonn, of the United States, reacts in the finish area following her run following her run in the second women's World Cup downhill skiing race at Lake Louise, Alberta, Saturday, Dec. 7, 2013.

Associated Press

VAL D'ISERE, France (AP)

— Lindsey Vonn had the second-fastest run in World Cup downhill training Thursday as she increased the pace in her comeback from injury.

The American finished only 0.04 seconds behind Dominique Gisin of Switzer-

land, who clocked 1 minute, 49.07 seconds on the Oreiller-Killy course.

Defending overall champion Tina Maze was third, 0.16 behind.

The downhill race is scheduled for Saturday with a giant slalom to follow on Sunday. Vonn has five World

Cup wins in Val d'Isere and also won two golds at the 2009 world championships. Earlier this month, Vonn raced for the first time in 10 months after a serious knee injury and a partial re-tear of one of two knee ligaments that were reconstructed. □

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	WILL FERRELL PAUL RUDD ANCHORMAN 2 THE LEGEND CONTINUES MON - THURS 4:00 6:35 9:10 FRI - SAT 4:00 6:35 9:10 11:45 SUN & HOL 4:00 6:35 9:10
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	KRISTEN BELL IDINA MENZEL REGULAR VERSION MON - THURS 5:05 7:30 FRI 5:05 7:30 9:55 SAT 2:40 5:05 7:30 9:55 SUN & HOL 2:40 5:05 7:30 3D VERSION MON - THURS 4:00 6:20 8:45 FRI 4:00 6:20 8:45 11:10 SAT 1:55 4:00 6:20 8:45 11:10 SUN & HOL 1:55 4:00 6:20 8:45
	OWEN WILSON WOODY HARRELSON FREEBIRDS MON - FRI 5:00 7:10 SAT, SUN & HOL 2:50 5:00 7:10

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Heat top Pacers in last meeting until March

TIM REYNOLDS

AP Basketball Writer

MIAMI (AP) — The best rivalry in the Eastern Conference is now on hiatus until March 26.

And the Miami Heat are a little bummed about that. Two games in an eight-day span between Miami and the Indiana Pacers are now in the books, both teams winning on their home floor, and yes, all that mutual dislike that's a direct byproduct of rugged battles in the past two postseasons is still very much evident.

The last chapter went to Miami, with Dwyane Wade scoring 32 points, LeBron James adding 24 on a sore left ankle, and the Heat erasing a 15-point deficit to beat the Pacers 97-94 on Wednesday.

The next time the principals involved will see each other is at the All-Star Game, where Indiana coach Frank Vogel will almost certainly be coaching an East team that will have many of his guys — as well as James, Wade and Chris Bosh — all sharing a locker room.

"I'm actually kind of sad we don't play them for three months," James said. "This is a really, really good thing, going against these guys. They bring out the best in us. We try to bring



Miami Heat's Ray Allen reacts after making a 3--pointer to put the Heat ahead in the second half of an NBA basketball game against the Indiana Pacers, Wednesday, Dec. 18, 2013, in Miami. The Heat won 97-94.

Associated Press

out the best in them. It was fun. It was fun these last eight days while it lasted, and now we can get on with the rest of our season." Both teams have 57 games left, and are separated by a game in the East. Indiana is now 20-5, the Heat 19-6. Don't be surprised if the

battle for the No. 1 seed goes into April, either. That being said, both teams are leery of saying the East is already just a two-team race, even though there's really no one in their collective rear-view mirror. "There is a large gap in the standings, but there

are some teams that had injuries and some teams that are up-and-coming that will make second-half pushes come playoff time," Vogel said.

The second-half push on Wednesday came from the Heat.

Bosh and Ray Allen hit big 3-pointers within a 31-second span for Miami, which needed a late 10-0 run to finish off the comeback.

"It shows we're a team that's been there before," Wade said. "No matter what the score is we always feel we have an opportunity to win the game."

So even when Indiana led 68-53 midway through the third quarter, hope remained.

And even when James and Mario Chalmers were getting in a heated exchange during one particularly bleak period — James said afterward he was wrong, and Chalmers said the matter was forgotten — the Heat didn't fall apart.

"It was a good win," James said. "Good, good, quality win against a very good team on our home floor. We had to overcome a lot." □

LeBron James atop newest list of NBA jersey sales

TIM REYNOLDS

AP Basketball Writer

MIAMI (AP) — Reigning NBA MVP LeBron James was relaxing with his wife not long ago when he looked around and was stunned to see someone wearing his Miami Heat No. 6 jersey. They were on their honeymoon in Venice.

"It's kind of crazy, honestly," James said. "There's a 'wow' factor."

James is again on top of the NBA's list of top-selling jerseys in the United States in the newest rankings released on Thursday. The rankings are based on overall sales from adidas and NBAStore.com in the fourth quarter of this year.

Kobe Bryant of the Los Angeles Lakers is No. 2 on the list, followed by Derrick Rose of the Chicago Bulls, Kevin Durant of the Oklahoma City Thunder and Carmelo Anthony of the New York Knicks.

"If people love the way I play the game of basketball, love the way I inspire to be better, that's great," James said. "Everytime I see someone in my jersey, a complete stranger, it's a 'wow' factor. For me to be the No. 1 guy, to have the most jersey sales, it's crazy." There's a double-digit percentage growth in jersey sales from last year, according to the league. And with two new versions

of the James jersey either hitting, or about to hit, the marketplace, his numbers might keep growing. James' short-sleeved jersey — the one teams are wearing on Christmas this year — is expected to be a big seller, as will the Name Collection jersey, which the Heat will wear early next year bearing nicknames on the back. James will be going with "King James" on his jersey for those games. Stephen Curry of the Golden State Warriors is on the list for the first time at No. 6. Other first-timers on the list include James Harden of the Houston Rockets (No. 12) and Paul George of the Indiana Pacers (No. 14).

After Curry, Dwyane Wade of the Miami Heat checks in at No. 7, followed by Chris Paul of the Los Angeles Clippers, Kyrie Irving of the Cleveland Cavaliers, Blake Griffin of the Los Angeles Clippers, Russell Westbrook of the Oklahoma City Thunder, Harden, Rajon Rondo of the Boston Celtics, George, and then Michael Carter-Williams of the Philadelphia 76ers at No. 15. Carter-Williams is the lone rookie on the 15-person list.

James, who also had the most popular jersey worldwide this year, has held the No. 1 position five times on the league's list of domestic jersey sales. □

Kobe likely to miss 6 weeks with fracture in knee

EL SEGUNDO, California (AP) — Kobe Bryant is expected to miss about six weeks with an injured left knee.

The Lakers said Thursday that an MRI showed Bryant has a fracture of the lateral tibial plateau of his knee.

The team said Bryant had hyperextended the knee in Tuesday night's game at Memphis.

The injury is the latest setback for the Lakers star,



In this Dec. 8, 2013, photo, Los Angeles Lakers' Kobe Bryant looks back during his team's loss to the Toronto Raptors during an NBA basketball game in Los Angeles.

Associated Press

who had only returned to the court on Dec. 8 after nearly eight months away because of a torn Achilles tendon.

Los Angeles had signed the fourth-leading scoring

in NBA history to a two-year contract extension last month. Bryant's new deal is reportedly worth \$48.5 million and takes him into his 20th season with the Lakers. □



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Gift Guide: Streaming players project video to TV

ANICK JESDANUN

AP Technology Writer

NEW YORK (AP) — I was happy watching television shows and movies on my computer — until I realized what I was missing.

Streaming video devices such as Roku, Apple TV and Google's Chromecast project video from Netflix, YouTube and other services onto the big-screen TV. Suddenly, the computer seems inadequate. Internet television will never be the same.

Internet-connected TVs, TiVo digital video recorders and various game consoles also come with apps for video services. But frequent users of these services will likely want a device that focuses on doing that one thing well. People must still subscribe individually to Netflix, Hulu Plus, Amazon Instant Video, Major League Baseball and other services, though that can often be done right from the TV screen. Some services require a subscription with certain cable or satellite TV providers. With HBO Go, for instance, Comcast and DirecTV subscribers can use Apple TVs but not Rokus, while it's the other way around with Charter.

— Roku 3 (\$100):

Roku started as a project within Netflix, which was looking for a cheap way for subscribers to get Internet movies and TV shows onto regular TVs. Roku was spun out into a separate company, and the device now works all major video services except Apple's iTunes.

It also plays games such as "Angry Birds," offers language lessons, supports music services such as Pandora and Spotify and lets you browse photos on Smugmug, Flickr and oth-

er services. All told, there are more than 1,000 apps available from Roku's store, many of them free.

Apps often replicate the experience on the services' websites. With Hulu, for instance, you can browse video by genre or play items in your queue. With Netflix, you get profiles for up to five individuals, with separate recommendations and watch lists.

With each service designing its own app, it feels as though I have 1,000 devices in one. Each app has its own on-screen keyboard when searching for video. The remote's up button gets me options such as closed captioning on Hulu, but it exits the video on Amazon and Netflix.

Roku's remote control has an unconventional headphone jack. Plug a pair in, and sound on the TV will automatically turn off. That's great if others in your household are trying to read or sleep.

Like Apple TV and Chromecast, the Roku 3 requires a high-definition TV with an HDMI port. Roku has cheaper models that work on older TVs, but they have slower processors and require Wi-Fi. The Roku 3 and Apple TV let you plug in an Internet cable if your wireless connection is fussy.

— Apple TV (\$99):

Think of Apple TV as a Roku with fewer apps — only 27, plus Apple's own services. Apple is constantly adding new ones, and those get installed automatically. Apple wants to keep the device clean and focus on the services people use most. It offers Netflix, Hulu, PBS, HBO, ESPN, YouTube and more — though Amazon's service is missing.

However, Apple TV is alone in supporting Apple's ser-



An Apple TV device, left, is shown alongside Google's Chromecast, center, and the Roku 2, Thursday, Dec. 19, 2013 in New York. Streaming video devices such as Roku, Apple TV and Google's Chromecast project video from Netflix, YouTube and other services onto the big-screen TV. Suddenly, the computer seems inadequate. Internet television will never be the same.

Associated Press

vices. You can buy or rent iTunes content right from the device, or you can play music and video stored on iCloud or your computer, iPhone or iPad. Instead of Pandora or Spotify, you get Apple's streaming music service, iTunes Radio.

Where Apple TV excels is in consistency. The keyboard is the same whether you're on HBO Go, Hulu Plus or Netflix, and the menu layout is similar from app to app. You can subscribe to many of the services right from the device and have

that billed to your iTunes account. No need to search for your credit card each time, as Roku requires.

Apple TV works fine as a stand-alone device, but much of its power comes from working with other Apple products. □



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Stocks pause on Wall Street a day after a surge

STEVE ROTHWELL
AP Business Writer

NEW YORK (AP) — U.S. stock indexes ended up pretty much where they started on Thursday, a day after a powerful surge.

Stocks gained the most in more than two months Wednesday after the Federal Reserve said it would reduce its bond-buying program to \$75 billion a month from \$85 billion. Investors saw the decision as a vote of confidence in the economy.

"It's good for the economy, and it's good for the market, to start standing on its own two feet," said Natalie Trunow, chief investment officer for stocks at Calvert Investments.

Financial markets were still digesting the Fed's move on Thursday. While stocks were holding close to record levels, Treasury yields climbed, the dollar rose and gold slumped to its lowest in more than three years. Major U.S. stock indexes started the day lower, moved gradually higher throughout the day and closed essentially flat.

The Standard & Poor's 500 index fell 1.05 points, or 0.06 percent, to 1,809.60. The Dow Jones industrial average rose 11.11 points, or 0.07 percent, to 16,179.08.

It rose 293 points the day before. The Nasdaq composite fell 11.93 points, or 0.3 percent, to 4,058.13.

Target fell \$1.40, or 2.2 percent, to \$62.15 after the company said that about

\$55.05 after the company said it will sell 70 million shares, more than half of them from CEO Mark Zuckerberg.

The S&P 500 is up 0.2 percent for the month after

interest rates. Stock prices have also been supported by growing corporate earnings and a gradually strengthening economy.

Investors were happy to get more reassurance Wednesday from the Fed that interest rates would stay low after the bond-buying stimulus was removed, said Eric Weigand, a senior portfolio manager at U.S. Bank.

The moderate pace of the reduction in the Fed's bond purchases was also encouraging. "It was not too hot and not too cold," Weigand said.

In government bond trading, the yield on the 10-year Treasury note rose to 2.93 percent from 2.89 percent late Wednesday. The yield climbs when bond prices fall. Demand for bonds was lower Thursday as traders anticipated less buying from the Fed.

Utilities companies fell the most of the 10 industry sectors that make up the S&P 500. Investors buy utility stocks because they pay big dividends. As bond yields rise, those stocks become less attractive.

The price of gold dropped \$41.40, or 3.4 percent, to close at \$1,193.60 an ounce. Gold hadn't settled below \$1,200 an ounce in more than three years. □



Traders James Dresch, left, and Timothy Nick work at the post that trades Target on the floor of the New York Stock Exchange Thursday, Dec. 19, 2013. Target says that about 40 million credit and debit card accounts may have been affected by a data breach that occurred just as the holiday shopping season in its U.S. stores shifted into high gear between Nov. 27 and Dec. 15. The stolen data includes customer names, credit and debit card numbers, card expiration dates and the three-digit security codes located on the backs of cards.

(AP Photo/Richard Drew)

40 million credit and debit card accounts may have been compromised by a data breach that happened just as shoppers flooded into stores for Black Friday, the day after Thanksgiving.

Facebook declined 52 cents, or 0.9 percent, to

moving into the green for the first time in December on Wednesday. If the gains hold, the index will have advanced for 10 of the 12 months this year.

Stock have surged this year as the Fed has kept up its economic stimulus and held down long-term

Weekly US jobless claims hit 9-month high of 379K

C. S. RUGABER
AP Economics Writer

WASHINGTON (AP) — The number of people seeking U.S. unemployment benefits rose 10,000 last week to a seasonally adjusted 379,000, the highest since March. The increase may reflect volatility around the Thanksgiving holidays.

The Labor Department said Thursday that the less volatile four-week average jumped 13,250 to 343,250, the second straight increase.

Applications are a proxy for layoffs. Last month, they fell to nearly the lowest level in six years, as companies cut fewer jobs. But two weeks ago, they surged 64,000 to 369,000.

Economists dismissed that spike, saying it likely reflect-

ed a Thanksgiving holiday that fell later in the month. That can distort the government's seasonal adjustments. But if the trend continues it would be a troubling sign of rising layoffs.

The number of Americans receiving benefits rose sharply. More than 4.4 million people received unemployment benefits in the week ended Nov. 30, the latest data available. That was 600,000 more than the previous week. Those figures aren't adjusted for seasonal patterns.

Still, most other recent job market data has been positive and economists generally expect unemployment benefits applications will soon fall back.

"We are inclined to ignore the recent claims data,"

said Joseph LaVorgna, an economist at Deutsche Bank. "We see little evidence to suggest that the labor market trend of the past few months has meaningfully changed."

Hiring has been healthy for the past four months. The economy added an average of 204,000 jobs a month from August through November, a solid improvement from earlier in the year.

The unemployment rate fell in November to a five-year low of 7 percent.

The unemployment rate remains above the historic averages of 5 percent to 6 percent that are associated with strong job markets. Federal Reserve Chairman Ben Bernanke said Wednesday that he ex-

pects the robust job gains to continue. Americans are spending more and the economy is less restrained by higher taxes and government spending cuts, he said.

Those trends have "increased our confidence that the job market gains will continue," Bernanke said at a press conference. The Fed said Wednesday that it would scale back its monthly bond purchases to \$75 billion from \$85 billion. The purchases are intended to lower long-term interest rates and encourage more spending.

The cut suggests that Fed policymakers think the job market and economy will continue to improve even with less help from the Fed. □

Hershey goes to China for a gigantic deal

MICHAEL J. de la MERCED
© 2013 New York Times

The Hershey Co. is not known for its deal-making appetite. But the U.S. chocolate giant is willing to open up for a big deal in China. Hershey announced Thursday that it had agreed to buy an 80 percent stake in Shanghai Golden Monkey for about \$584 million, taking control of a well-known producer of chocolate, candy and gum. It is by far the largest ever acquisition by Hershey, according to Standard & Poor's Capital IQ. All of the chocolatier's previous deals were valued at less than \$200 million.

Traditionally, the company has shied away from big deals. Its planned merger with the Wm. Wrigley Jr. Co., which would have been worth \$12.5 billion, fell apart at the last minute in 2002 after its board decided not to sell. And after months of weighing a white-knight bid for Cadbury, potentially wrestling it away from Kraft, the chocolate-maker decided against making a move.

But Shanghai Golden Monkey fits squarely in Hershey's deal criteria. The Chinese company is well known in its home market, particularly for its milk candy, with double-digit net sales and an expected \$225 million in revenue this year.

Thursday's deal is eminently affordable for the U.S. chocolate-maker, which reported holding \$701.3 million in cash and short-term investments as of Sept. 30. Moreover, the company will use money from its Netherlands subsidiary to pay for the acquisition, allowing the company to put overseas cash to more productive use than bringing it back to the U.S. and paying a big tax bill. Hershey has been keenly focused on China, its main international market; in May, it opened an innovation center in Shanghai meant to help it develop the kinds of candy preferred by Chinese consumers. □



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U.S. mobile ad spending to soar, says eMarketer

NEW YORK (AP) — Research firm eMarketer expects spending on mobile advertisements to hit nearly \$9.6 billion in the U.S. this year, up from \$4.4 billion in 2012 and from less than \$1.6 billion in 2011 as Facebook and Google barrel ahead.

Mobile ads now represent nearly 23 percent of the money companies spend on digital advertising, or ads people see on their computers, tablets and mobile phones. That's up from about 12 percent last year and less than 5 percent in 2011.

Facebook, which began showing mobile ads in 2012 and Google, which has by far the biggest share of the digital advertising market, account for much of this growth. EMarketer expects Facebook Inc. to surpass Microsoft Corp. and Yahoo Inc. when it comes to digital ad revenue this year, trailing only Google Inc. That's faster than it had predicted earlier.

Google is expected to take a 40 percent share of the digital ad market this year, compared with 7.4 percent for Facebook, 5.9 percent for Microsoft and 5.8 percent for Yahoo, according to eMarketer. EMarketer estimates that overall digital ad spending in the U.S. will grow by nearly 16 percent this year, to \$42.6 billion. Companies are spending more money on mobile advertisements because that's where their customers are spending their time.

According to the Pew Internet & American Life Project, 63 percent of adult mobile phone owners use their gadgets to go online, a figure that has doubled since 2009. □

Facebook to sell 70M shares, 41M from CEO

MENLO PARK, California (AP) — Facebook and Chairman and CEO Mark Zuckerberg are selling a combined 70 million shares of Class A stock as the social media company prepares to join the Standard & Poor's 500 index. The offering includes more

than 41 million shares from Zuckerberg, who also will buy Class B shares that carry more voting weight. After a premarket stock dip of more than 4 percent on the news, Facebook's stock recovered somewhat and was down less than 1 percent in afternoon trad-

ing on Thursday.

The Menlo Park, California, company said Thursday that the Class A shares will be offered mainly to index funds whose portfolios are based on stocks included in the index. The S&P 500 will add Facebook on Friday after markets close.

The index is a list of companies that have a market capitalization over \$4 billion and is meant to be a snapshot of the U.S. economy.

At Wednesday's closing price of \$55.57 per share, that would put the total value of the offering, not counting expenses, at about \$3.89 billion. Zuckerberg's offering of 41.3 million shares would generate about \$2.3 billion based on Wednesday's close, not counting expenses.

The company said Zuckerberg will use most of the proceeds from his sale of Class A shares to pay taxes he will incur in connection with exercising an option to buy 60 million shares of Class B stock. He's also using part of it for charitable contributions.

That said, Standard & Poor's equity analyst Scott Kessler noted that Zuckerberg's ownership has declined "only slightly" since Facebook's May 2012 initial public offering, and that the planned sale "would only minimally reduce his stake and voting power." □



A sign at Facebook's headquarters in Menlo Park, Calif. Facebook on Thursday, Dec. 19, 2013 said it plans to offer 70 million shares of its Class A stock in a sale that includes more than 41 million shares from chairman and CEO Mark Zuckerberg, who also will buy Class B shares that carry more voting weight.

(AP Photo/Ben Margot)

Gold sinks below \$1,200, lowest in 3 years

NEW YORK (AP) — The price of gold slumped below \$1,200 an ounce Thursday, the lowest in more than three years, a day after the Federal Reserve said it would pull back on its stimulus program.

Gold for February delivery plunged \$41.40, or 3.4 percent, to \$1,193.60 an ounce. It hadn't closed below \$1,200 an ounce since August 2010.

Gold went as high as \$1,900 an ounce in August 2011 partly because traders feared that the Fed's efforts to support the U.S. economy with easy money

policies would cause inflation. That never happened. The latest plunge came a day after the Fed said it would reduce its bond purchases next month, further dissipating concerns about inflation.

The Fed also noted that the U.S. economy was improving and that the drag on the economy caused by budget policies in Washington could be diminishing.

Fears of inflation, political gridlock, a weak economy — all three were "stool legs" for the run-up in gold prices in recent years, Kitco Metals analyst Peter Hug

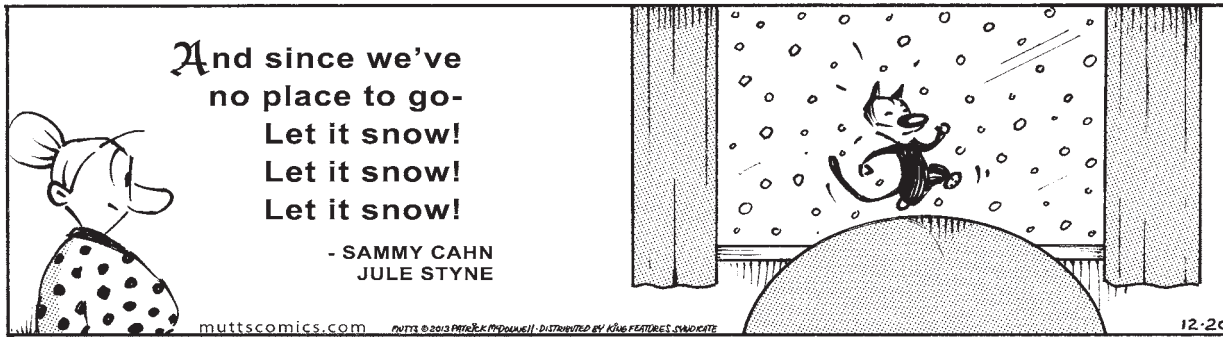
wrote in a note to investors. With all three no longer as much of a threat, in the view of the market, gold has continued to slide, Hug said. Gold is down 29 percent so far this year and is heading for its first annual loss since 2000.

The price of silver also fell sharply. The March contract fell 87.3 cents, or 4.4 percent, to \$19.186 an ounce.

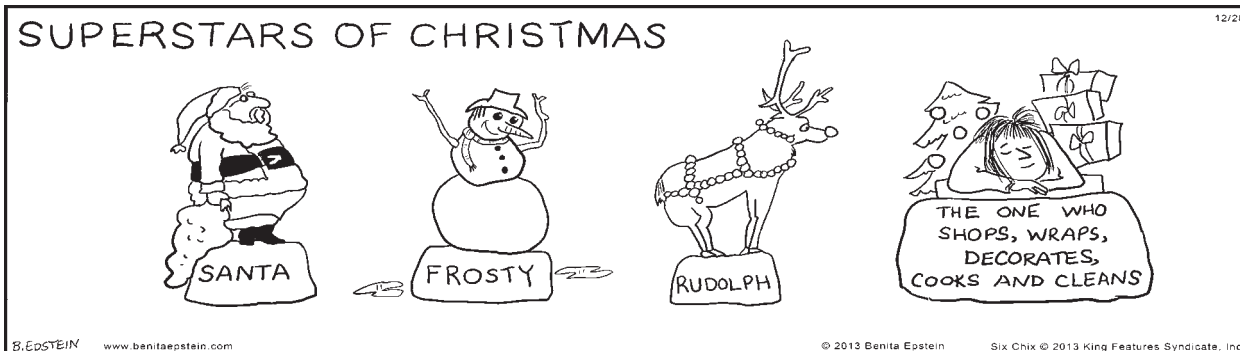
High-grade copper for March delivery fell 2 cents, or 0.7 percent, to \$3.2955 a pound. March palladium fell \$3.15, or 0.5 percent, to \$693.30 an ounce and Jan-

uary platinum fell \$24.30, or 1.8 percent, to \$1,318.40 an ounce. In other trading, crude oil rose 97 cents, or 1 percent, to \$98.77 a barrel. Wholesale gasoline futures rose 4 cents to \$2.74 a gallon and heating rose 2 cents to \$3.03 a gallon. Natural gas rose 21 cents to \$4.46 per 1,000 cubic feet. Crop prices were mixed. Corn for March delivery rose 5.5 cents, or 1.3 percent, to \$4.305 a bushel, January soybeans rose 3 cents, or 0.2 percent, to \$13.27 a bushel. March wheat fell 2 cents, or 0.3 percent, to \$6.1075 a bushel. □

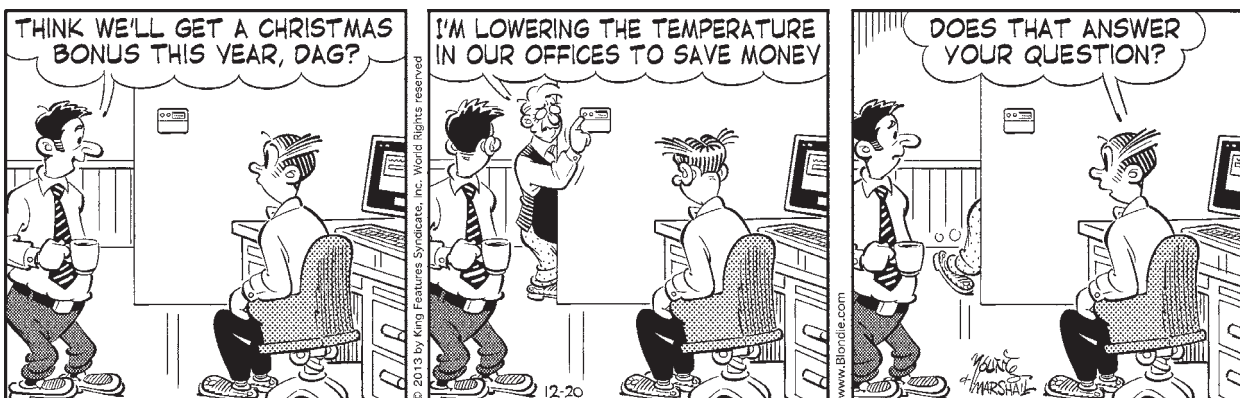
Mutts



6 Chix



Blondie



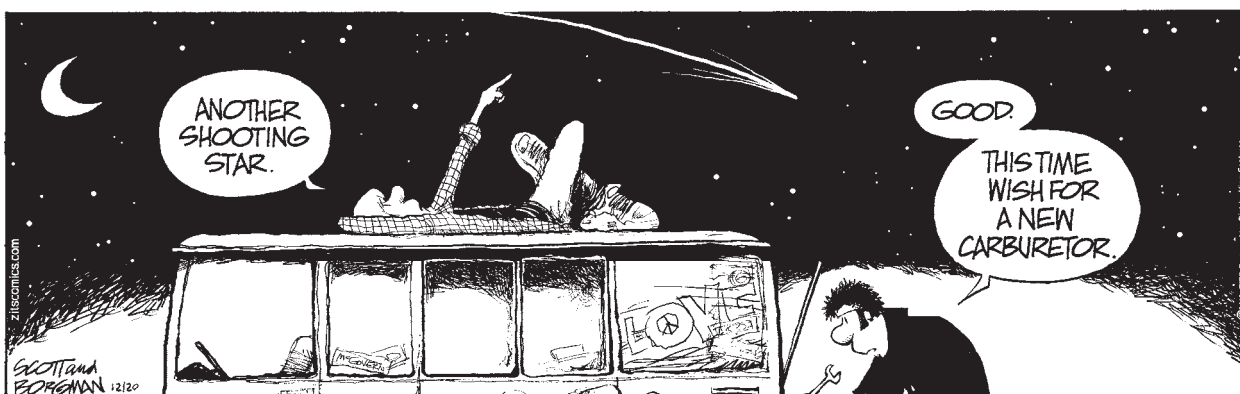
Mother Goose & Grimm



Baby Blues



Zits



Conceptis Sudoku

	6	8	4					
7				3	5	2		
	2	4						
1			2	6	8			4
						5	9	
		9	5	4				1
					7	3	6	

Difficulty Level ★★★★★

12/20

Sudoku is a number-placing puzzle based on a 9x9 grid with several given numbers. The object is to place the numbers 1 to 9 in the empty squares so that each row, each column and each 3x3 box contains the same number only once. The difficulty level of the Conceptis Sudoku increases from Monday to Sunday.

Yesterday's puzzle answer

1	4	8	2	3	9	5	7	6
5	9	6	4	1	7	3	2	8
3	2	7	5	8	6	4	1	9
8	5	3	7	9	1	2	6	4
6	1	4	8	5	2	7	9	3
2	7	9	3	6	4	1	8	5
7	8	5	6	2	3	9	4	1
4	3	1	9	7	8	6	5	2
9	6	2	1	4	5	8	3	7

ACROSS

- Elmer's ___; white adhesive
- Suez or Erie
- Fraudulent way to make money
- Watermelon casing
- Nimble
- Rubber tube
- Loose ___; bits of unfinished business
- Churchill Downs and Pimlico
- Tiny
- Leak out
- Accumulate
- Gallant
- Go quickly
- Groups of lions
- Not as warm
- All prepared
- Snatches
- Vic Tayback's "Alice" role
- Flows back
- Remembered Texas mission
- "___ Jones's Locker"; bottom of the ocean
- Actor Brynner
- Blackboard
- More rational
- ___ up; joined forces
- Figure with a circumference
- Money paid to Uncle Sam
- ___-frutti
- Hate
- Broad
- Dessert choice
- Strolling along
- One of the planets
- Qualified
- Dive forward
- Perched upon
- Comrades
- Common alloy
- Actor Sean ___

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Created by Jacqueline E. Mathews

12/20/13

Thursday's Puzzle Solved

PER	SIGHS	DOPE
OPEN	TROOP	EYES
DINE	RABBI	SEEP
COALITION	INKY	
RIDE	NOG	
SCHEME	THINNEST	
ERASE	SWINE	MOO
AUNT	ICING	LOBO
LEO	STAND	HOTEL
SLICKERS	PETERS	
EAR	BART	
SAGA	ABSORBENT	
OWES	TACIT	REEF
LANE	EROSE	YEAR
DYES	SEWED	DRY

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12/20/13

- Does penance
- Ship's framework
- Short heavy stick
- Chablis or rosé
- Apply a trace of color to
- Element whose symbol is Fe
- Without delay, for short
- Sports network
- "Ali ___ and the Forty Thieves"
- Golfer Ernie ___
- Groove
- Atlas page

DOWN

- Got bigger

Bloomberg, de Blasio offer clashing views on fiscal future

MICHAEL M. GRYNBAUM

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NEW YORK - Talk about a tale of two cities.

In dueling appearances this week, the incoming and departing mayors of New York laid out starkly different visions of the city's fiscal future, with a few jabs, subtle and not so subtle, thrown in for good

Bloomberg, who have exchanged harsh rhetoric in the past, have mostly maintained statesmanlike stoicism about each other. But with the Jan. 1 inauguration just two weeks away, some amount of disdain from both men is seeping out.

Bloomberg, a Republican-turned-independent who

sions from municipal labor unions, whose leaders are perceived as being close to the mayor-elect.

De Blasio, in his own remarks, was far more explicit in his criticism, dismissing Bloomberg's policy prescriptions as those of an elected official "simply trying to cement his legacy."

"He can give speeches, and that's his right, but we're the ones who now have to deal with the open labor contracts," de Blasio said, adding, "I will keep my own counsel."

When a reporter asked whether the mayor-elect felt any pressure from Bloomberg to follow his policy advice, de Blasio allowed a mischievous smile to spread across his face.

"As you can see," de Blasio said, his voice steeped in sarcasm, "the pressure is overwhelming." He added, with a deadpan laugh, "I'm afflicted."

The men spoke at roughly the same lunchtime hour, but in different boroughs and in different settings. A former bond trader, Bloomberg chose to deliver the final major speech of his mayoralty in Manhattan, to the Economic Club of New York, a collective of Wall Street dignitaries that also hosts events with Federal Reserve bankers.



New York Mayor Michael Bloomberg, second from right, during his final major speech of his mayoralty with Roger Ferguson, the chairman of the Economic Club of New York, at the Marriott Marquis hotel in New York, Dec. 18, 2013. In dueling appearances on Wednesday, Bill de Blasio and Bloomberg — the incoming and outgoing mayors of New York — laid out starkly different visions of the city's fiscal future, with a few jabs, subtle and not so subtle, thrown in for good measure.

(Richard Perry/The New York Times)

measure.

Mayor Michael R. Bloomberg, in a swan-song speech to a corporate audience in Manhattan, trumpeted the balanced budget that his administration has left for its successor. But in a clear message to Mayor-elect Bill de Blasio, he warned that the self-interest of politicians and union leaders - the "labor-electoral complex," as he deemed it - could quickly lead to devastating fiscal consequences. De Blasio, announcing his new budget director at a public-college campus in Brooklyn, painted a darker picture, declaring that no new mayor had "faced the fiscal stress" that he will inherit and blaming Bloomberg for leaving dozens of union contracts unresolved.

"No previous mayor," de Blasio said, "ever let that happen."

Transitions can be an uneasy period for any two leaders, and de Blasio and

is a billionaire businessman, has long lamented the foibles of career politicians. He suggested in his speech that de Blasio, a liberal Democrat, would be irresponsible if he did not demand conces-

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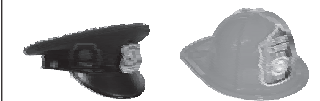
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Europe launches satellite to map 1 billion stars

DANICA COTO
FRANK JORDANS
Associated Press

BERLIN (AP) — The European Space Agency launched its star-surveying satellite Gaia into space Thursday, hoping to produce the most accurate three-dimensional map of the Milky Way and to better understand the evolution of our galaxy.

The satellite was lifted into space from French Guiana at 6:12 a.m. (0912 GMT; 4:12 a.m. EST) aboard a Russian-made Soyuz rocket, the agency said.

Soon after the launch, Gaia unfurled its 10-meter (33-feet) circular sun shield — a crucial moment in the mission. The shield protects the spacecraft's sensitive instruments from the rays of the sun while simultaneously collecting solar energy to power the spacecraft.

"Everything was super smooth," said Paolo Ferri, head of mission operations at the Paris-based European Space Agency.

Gaia is now heading for a stable orbit around a point known as Lagrange 2 — some 1.5 million kilometers (930 million miles) away on the opposite side of the Earth from the sun. Once it gets there next month, the satellite's instruments will be switched on and it will follow what Ferri described as "a very peculiar pattern" designed to keep its back always turned to the sun. Timo Prusti, ESA's project scientist, likened the mission's goal to the switch from two-dimensional movies to 3D.

At the moment, he said scientists are working with a largely "flat" map of the galaxy.

Using its twin telescopes, Gaia will study the position, distance, movement,



This photo provided by ESA (European Space Agency), taken on Saturday, Dec. 14, 2013, shows the Gaia satellite at the Kourou space base, French Guiana. The European Space Agency successfully launched a satellite, named Gaia, Thursday Dec. 19, 2013 in a bid to produce the most accurate three-dimensional map of our part of the Milky Way, and provide an insight into the evolution of the galaxy.

chemical composition and brightness of a billion stars in the galaxy, or roughly 1 percent of the Milky Way's 100 billion stars.

The data will help scientists determine the Milky Way's origin and evolution, according to Jos de Bruijne, deputy project scientist for the Gaia program.

"The prime importance of this mission is to do galactic archaeology," he said in a phone interview from French Guiana. "It will reveal the real history of our galaxy."

The project is the successor to ESA's Hipparcos satellite, which was launched in 1989 and measured the position of 100,000 stars in the Milky Way.

Gaia, which is named after an ancient Greek deity, will go far beyond that. Scientists have compared its measuring accuracy to measuring the diameter of a human hair from 1,000 ki-

lometers (600 miles) away. "There is still a lot that we don't understand about the Milky Way," said Andrew Fox, an astronomer with the Space Telescope Science Institute in Baltimore, Maryland. He is not involved in the project, but his position at the science center is funded by the European Space Agency. ESA has dubbed Gaia the

"ultimate discovery machine" because its sophisticated instruments will allow scientists to look for small wobbles in stars' movements that indicate the presence of nearby planets.

"Those are the stars that people are going to go out and look for planets around, and ultimately for signs of life," said Fox.

Associated Press

Equipped with dozens of cameras capable of piecing together 1,000-mega-pixel images, scientists also expect to find hundreds of thousands of previously undiscovered asteroids and comets inside our solar system.

Beyond that, scientists hope that Gaia can also be used to test a key part of Albert Einstein's General Theory of Relativity that predicts "dips" and "warps" in space caused by the gravity of stars and planets.

Carmen Jordi, an astronomer at the University of Barcelona who is involved in the mission, said the satellite's findings will become the main reference for scientists in the years to come. "Almost all the fields of astrophysics will be affected," said Jordi.

The mission's scientific operations will begin in about 4 ½ months. The 740 million-euro (\$1-billion) mission, which was delayed by about a month due to a technical problem with another satellite, has a planned lifetime of five years.

If Gaia is still operational after that, scientists say they might extend its mission for up to two years. □

Janet Rowley, cancer genetics pioneer, dies at 88

CHICAGO (AP) — Dr. Janet Rowley, a pioneer in cancer genetics research, has died at age 88.

Rowley spent most of her career at the University of Chicago, where she also obtained her medical degree. She died Tuesday of ovarian cancer complications at her home nearby, the university said in a statement.

Rowley conducted landmark research with leukemia in the 1970s, linking cancer with genetic abnormalities — work that led to targeted drug treatment for leukemia. She identified a genetic process called translocation, now widely accepted. By 1990, more than 70 translocations had been identified in various

cancers, according to her biography on the National Library of Medicine's website.

"Janet Rowley's work established that cancer is a genetic disease," Mary-Claire King, president of the American Society of Human Genetics, said recently. "We are still working from her paradigm."

Rowley, known among colleagues for her intelligence and humility, called receiving the presidential award, in 2009, "quite remarkable." "I've never regretted being in science and being in research," Rowley said at the time. "The exhilaration that one gets in making new discoveries is beyond description."

With her silvery hair and

twinkling eyes, Rowley was a recognizable figure at the University of Chicago, often seen riding her bike around the South Side campus, even up until a few months ago despite her disease. She remained active in research until close to her death and hoped that her own cancer could contribute to understanding of the disease.

Just last month, she was well enough to attend a celebration of the 50th anniversary of the presidential medal in Washington alongside other previous recipients and this year's winners, who include several scientists, former President Bill Clinton, Oprah Winfrey, baseball's Ernie Banks and Loretta Lynn. □

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Rarely seen Van Gogh moves to National Gallery

BRETT ZONGKER

Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — A Vincent Van Gogh painting that has been hidden away at a Virginia estate for decades will have a new home at the National Gallery of Art.

The rarely seen 1890 painting, "Green Wheat Fields, Auvers," depicts a landscape in bright greens and blues from northern France when Van Gogh was living just north of Paris in Auvers-sur-Oise. The painting was given to the museum by philanthropist and art collector Paul Mellon, and it has been kept in his family's home in Upperville, Virginia, since 1955.

It will go on display Friday alongside five other Van Gogh paintings. The museum now holds nine altogether.

The painting has only been exhibited once before in the United States in a show devoted to the Mellon collection in 1966 at the National Gallery of Art. The painting spent its early years with Van Gogh's brother Theo and then was traded in Germany. It was shown in a major exhibition in Cologne, Germany, in 1912 and then in Berlin. But it has mostly been out of view since the 1930s, said French paintings curator Mary Morton.

The painting was created while Van Gogh was

struggling. He had cut off his earlobe on Christmas Eve in 1888 and committed himself to an asylum in southern France a few months later before he returned to northern France and turned to painting spectacular landscapes.

"It's really one of the great landscapes of that moment. It is in very good condition," Morton said, adding that it retains the thick paint and expressive, emotional brushstrokes that Van Gogh became famous for. "This is why we love him so much."

It's likely impossible to pinpoint when this painting was created. It's not dated. But it is part of a group of paintings he likely completed in June or July of 1890 before his death in late July. There's no way to know what his final painting was, Morton said.

While there are multiple Van Gogh exhibitions around the world every year, this painting has never been part of those.

"What's great about this picture is that it really is just a field painting. It's just about grass and wind and sky," Morton said. "It's very sort of pure in that sense. There's no story. There are no figures. There's nothing to read. It's just this feeling he has while he's out there, and he's completely absorbed by the environment." □



This undated image provided by the National Gallery of Art, shows "Green Wheat Fields, Auvers" by Vincent Van Gogh. The painting, that has been hidden away at a Virginia estate for decades, will have a new home at the National Gallery of Art.

Associated Press

Foo Fighters, Roots to perform Super Bowl weekend

NEW YORK (AP)—Foo Fighters, The Roots and Imagine Dragons will perform on a cruise ship ahead of the Super Bowl.

The bands will hit the stage on the Bud Light Hotel New York, which will be docked at Pier 88 in Manhattan on the Hudson River. The Super Bowl will be played Feb. 2 at the MetLife Stadium in East Rutherford, N.J.

The Roots will perform with Run DMC and Busta

Rhymes on Jan. 30, while Grammy-nominated Imagine Dragons will perform a day later.

Foo Fighters will headline the main event on Feb. 1, where Zac Brown Band will also perform.

Fall Out Boy and country singer Jake Owen will play a concert before the Super Bowl.

The cruise ship will offer lodging for 4,000 guests in 1,900 staterooms. □

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Katie Couric's talk show to end after this season



This Oct. 23, 2013 file photo shows TV host Katie Couric at the Somaly Mam Foundation Gala in New York.

Associated Press

FRAZIER MOORE
AP Television Writer

NEW YORK (AP) — Katie Couric is calling it quits on her weekday talk show as she heads to Yahoo. Couric and Disney-ABC, which produces the syndicated "Katie" show, said Thursday it will wrap after this, its second season. Shuttering the show was a joint decision, both parties said. "While production will continue on 'Katie' through June 2014, we've mutually agreed that there will not be a third season of the show," they said. "Katie" will continue to air through the summer. The announcement was widely expected. Last month, Couric, 56, an-

nounced she is joining Yahoo to anchor an expansion of the Internet company's video news initiative. She will serve as the Sunnyvale, California-based company's global anchor, a role she described as a "work in progress." At the time, she also announced she is leaving ABC, which she joined in the summer of 2011 in an unusual arrangement as a utility player for the news division while getting her syndicated show off the ground. "Katie" premiered a year later with high expectations. It reunited her with Jeff Zucker, who as executive producer of the "Today" show was in the con-

trol room during many of Couric's star-making years at the NBC morning show, on which she first became a household name. Couric was co-host on "Today" from 1991 until she left to join CBS in 2006. Zucker served as an executive producer of "Katie" but left to become president of CNN Worldwide this year. The "Katie" show was poised to fill the huge gap left in the afternoon schedule by Oprah Winfrey, who left the syndicated daytime arena in the summer of 2011 to concentrate on her OWN cable network. But with an average of 2.2 million viewers, "Katie" never emerged as a breakout hit. □

Demi Lovato confirms 'X Factor' exit

NICOLE EVATT
Associated Press

LOS ANGELES (AP) — Demi Lovato says she's leaving

In this Jan. 11, 2012 file photo, Demi Lovato, poses backstage at the People's Choice Awards in Los Angeles. Lovato said Wednesday, Dec. 18, 2013, that she is leaving 'The X Factor' to focus on her music.

Associated Press



"The X Factor" to focus on her music career. In an interview after Wednesday's performance show the 21-year-old singer-actress said she wanted to return to her "roots." Lovato plans to devote next year to touring and working on a new album. □



In this Sept. 21, 2013 file photo, Willie Nelson performs during the Farm Aid 2013 concert at Saratoga Performing Arts Center in Saratoga Springs, N.Y. The Recording Academy announced Thursday, Dec. 19, 2013, that Nelson will perform at the Grammy Awards show on Jan. 26, 2014.

Associated Press

Daft Punk, Willie Nelson to perform at Grammy Awards

NEW YORK (AP) — Willie Nelson and Daft Punk will hit the stage at the Grammy Awards next month. The Recording Academy announced Thursday that Nelson will perform alongside Kris Kristofferson, Merle Haggard and Blake Shelton at the Jan. 26 awards show. Rapper Kendrick Lamar, who is up for seven awards, will also perform. Other performers include two-time nominees Imag-

ine Dragons and Pink, who will sing with Nate Ruess of fun. Daft Punk is up for five trophies, including album of the year. The electronic group will compete with albums from Lamar, Taylor Swift, Sara Bareilles and Macklemore & Ryan Lewis. Jay Z leads the 56th annual Grammy Awards with nine nominations. LL Cool J will host the show, which will air live on CBS from the Staples Center in Los Angeles. □



In this April 17, 2013 file photo, Thomas Bangalter, left, and Guy-Manuel de Homem-Christo, from the group Daft Punk pose for a portrait in Los Angeles. The Recording Academy announced Thursday, Dec. 19, 2013, that Daft Punk will perform at the Grammy Awards show on Jan. 26, 2014.

Associated Press

Spying Run Amok



MAUREEN DOWD

© 2013 New York Times

WASHINGTON - I miss Brody.

So why did he have to go?

The poor guy was put at the end of a rope because the writers of "Homeland" were at the end of their rope.

They had conjured a hypnotic character who was both hero and villain, patriot and traitor. Brody was still on the run, but his creators had run out of ways to reconcile their curdled Marine's poles without making the plots too implausible.

In the finale, during a scene set in a CIA safe house in Iran, Brody fretted to Carrie that maybe he was, as a doctor in Caracas had said, "a cockroach. Unkillable, bringing misery wherever I go." The talented Damian Lewis told The Times' Dave Izkoff, "They ended up creating such a compelling, unpredictable, sad and ambiguous character who was capable of so much damage - he was able to affect story on such a grand scale. They created a monster that they couldn't quite control." He added, "The thought of having to continue to write him was too hard, perhaps," noting: "Brody's a very unbalancing force."

It's so easy to wipe the slate clean on TV. In real life, Americans must keep struggling to fathom the compelling, unpredictable, sad, ambiguous, unbalancing force, the young man on the run who sought to cause damage on a grand scale, and who has sparked a national debate about whether he's hero or villain, patriot or traitor.

After a federal judge here said in a ruling on Monday that the NSA's collection of phone data on all Americans was "almost Orwellian," an assault on privacy that would leave James Madison "aghast," a civil liberties group that had plastered a D.C. bus with the words "Thank you, Edward Snowden!" said it saw a "significant increase" in donations to expand the campaign. Whatever we think of Snowden - self-aggrandizing creep or self-sacrificing crusader against creepy government spying or sociopath with stolen documents, as The Wall Street Journal put it, or someone who should "swing from a tall oak tree," as John Bolton told Fox News - it is absolutely clear that the NSA went wild with technology that allowed it to go wild. These technological toys turn everyone into thieves. It is clear that the balance of national security versus civil liberties is way off kilter. President Barack Obama said he welcomed a debate on the morality of his Big Brother eavesdropping program,

but he never really wanted it. He irritated some of the tech CEOs who came for a meeting at the White House Tuesday by yanking the conversation from the overzealous NSA surveillance that creates suspicion of their complicity to the underwhelming roll-out of Obamacare.

Bloomberg News reported that Yahoo's chief executive, Marissa Mayer, cautioned the president that backlash over U.S. spying could Balkanize the Internet, as countries put in place different standards to stymie surveillance. It took a passionate 64-year-old judge who likes exclamation points to finally holler "Hold it!" "It's a wake-up call," said Sen. Ron Wyden of Oregon, a leading critic of the NSA's indiscriminate scooping up of data. "Piece after piece, the government's case has fallen apart."

(The old joke of No Such Agency might become No Stopping That Agency.)

As The Times' chief Washington correspondent Carl Hulse tweeted, Judge Richard J. Leon was nominated to the bench by President George W. Bush on the "notable date" of Sept. 10, 2001 - the eve of the day that reshaped the American psyche, sometimes in unsettling ways that erred on the side of security rather than the values that make America. After W. and Dick Cheney ignored warnings of an al-Qaida strike, they proliferated a mindset that there was no step too far to protect us from that happening again, be it attacking a country that hadn't attacked us, torturing, warrantless wiretapping, spying Stasi-style on our allies or denying prisoners due process. Leon wrestled with the legality of holding detainees at Guantánamo Bay and now he suggests that the NSA snooping may be unconstitutional.

The government's legal precedent, he wrote in a ruling that will reverberate in Congress and at the Supreme Court, has been eclipsed by "a cellphone-centric lifestyle heretofore inconceivable."

"It's one thing to say that people expect phone companies to occasionally provide information to law enforcement," he wrote, "it is quite another to suggest that our citizens expect all phone companies to operate what is effectively a joint intelligence-gathering operation with the government."

Though the Justice Department tried to justify the mammoth hoovering by insisting on the need for speed, the judge pointed out that the NSA couldn't cite a single instance in which its haystack of data had produced the needle to puncture an imminent attack. It's always the case that technology is invented and used before its consequences are known. And it is also true that there are terrorists who want to hurt us.

But Leon struck a blow for the proposition that our moral and legal values regarding privacy are not obsolete just because some government employees out in suburban Maryland in a secretive agency with its own exit off the Baltimore-Washington Parkway got carried away with their cool new toys. □



The Year After Newtown



JOE NOCERA

© 2013 New York Times

Chris Murphy, a freshman senator from Connecticut, made his maiden speech on the Senate floor on April 10. It was the day the Senate was set to vote on a bill that would make background checks mandatory for anyone who wanted to purchase a gun. "I didn't expect this," he told his colleagues, meaning that when he was running for office he had never expected that his first Senate speech would be about gun violence.

But then came Dec. 14, 2012, when Adam Lanza barged into the Sandy Hook Elementary School and killed 20 children and six adults in the space of about 10 minutes.

Murphy was a senator-elect by then. He was standing on the train platform in Bridgeport, Conn., planning to take his family to see the Christmas tree in Rockefeller Center, when he got the news. He instead made his way to Newtown and was there when the parents were informed that their children were dead.

"I wish I'd never had to see that," he told me recently. Newtown galvanized Murphy. By the time he made his speech in April, the gun issue had become his passion.

"When a school group asked

what I wanted to see done in my first term, I told them I wanted to see an anti-gun-violence bill pass," he said.

Toward the end of that April speech, Murphy displayed photographs of some of the children who had died at Newtown. This child had loved to play outside, he said. That child was happiest when he was singing. Murphy visibly choked up as he spoke.

The background check bill failed in the Senate, of course. It was a deflating moment for anyone who had hoped that this horrible tragedy would finally lead to saner gun laws.

Murphy, however, has continued to tell humanizing stories about victims of gun violence. He does it most Monday afternoons, during short speeches in which he also lists the latest tally of gun deaths since Newtown.

"I want to gently, but consistently, jog the conscience" of his Senate colleagues, he told me.

In the run-up to Saturday's anniversary of the Sandy Hook shooting, my inbox has been inundated with press releases and reports about how to decrease gun violence. Here is the Educational Fund to Stop Gun Violence, with a new report making recommendations on how to keep guns out of the hands of the mentally ill. Sandy Hook Promise - the group that was formed by a handful of the parents who lost children in the massacre - announced an effort called Parent Together, which they describe as "a new national grassroots campaign to educate and empower parents to prevent gun violence."

Moms Demand Action for Gun Sense in America, another group that sprang up after Newtown, announced that it was joining forces with Mayors Against Illegal Guns, the brainchild of New York Mayor Michael Bloomberg, to "gather at over 50 events in more than 35 states to honor the victims of the tragedy in Newtown." Another new group,

Evolve, which hopes to change the culture of gun ownership, went live with its website a day before the anniversary.

Still, despite this flurry of worthwhile activity, there simply is no group that can match the fanaticism and single-mindedness of the National Rifle Association. Moms Demand Action held a conference call in which it trumpeted its successes. But c'mon. According to Robert Farago, who blogs at a website called The Truth About Guns, of the various gun bills that were passed this year, 74 were pro-gun while only 66 were gun-control-oriented. Not only was the NRA able to block the background check bill in the Senate, it also succeeded in recalling two state legislators in Colorado who had led the push for new gun laws in that state.

Given the day-to-day realities, it is hard to be optimistic. But it's important not to give up. Thus we end this column in the spirit of Chris Murphy.

- Dax Dixon was 12 years old when he was shot accidentally while playing with a friend. "He had a good heart and seemed to try to bring out the best in everybody that he met," said his father.

- Arabian Gayles, 11, died in September when bullets fired outside her home struck her while she was sleeping. "She was just a sweet kid, well behaved, polite, respectful, and wanted to learn, and one thing we noticed about her, she always would go to help people, she was always trying to help people," said her minister.

- Twelve-year-old Taylor Wheeler was shot by a 15-year-old boy, who then appears to have shot himself. Taylor was a fun-loving kid who made people laugh and cheered them up. "He was a lovable kid," said a classmate.

According to Slate's gun tracker, as of Friday evening there have been around 11,460 gun deaths in the year since the Newtown massacre. □

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